

BILL OF RIGHTS MONTH



STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST



The United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts and The Massachusetts Chapter of the Federal Bar Association are partnering to host a Bill of Rights Month student essay contest, open to all public high school students across Boston, Worcester, and Springfield.

A judging committee comprised of federal judges and FBA board members will decide on the top two essays submitted.

First and second-place winners will receive a cash prize. Finalists will have their essays published on the Court's website and FBA newsletter.

A virtual event will be held in late January to celebrate the winners.

DEADLINE: JANUARY 3, 2022

Answer the following questions in 550 words or less:

- When drafting the Constitution, the founders considered it essential to create an independent judiciary. How does an independent judiciary protect our basic rights, especially those in the Bill of Rights, like the freedom of speech, press, assembly, and right to a trial by jury? (Provide specific examples.)
- How does the judiciary have a stabilizing effect on democracy when there are natural tensions among the three branches of government? What examples can you identify of the judicial system doing this?



CASH PRIZES:

FIRST: \$500

SECOND: \$300



PRIZES ALSO AWARDED FOR HONORABLE MENTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

- Open to all public high school students in Boston, Worcester, and Springfield
- Family members of USDC-MA or FBA members are not eligible to participate

CONSIDERATIONS

- Structured, creative, and tightly-focused response that demonstrates a genuine grappling with the topic
- Convincing arguments supported by specific examples
- Carefully proofread for grammar and punctuation
- Please see the full list of requirements on the next page

RESOURCES

Start here:

- [Court Shorts: Separation of Powers](#) (U.S. Courts)
- [The Bill of Rights: What Does it Say?](#) (National Archives)
- [Interactive Constitution](#) (National Constitution Center)

HOW TO SUBMIT

- Visit the following site:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021_BOR_Essay

- Fill out the form and press "Submit"
(Incomplete entries will not be considered!)

QUESTIONS?

- Contact Annabel Rodriguez (FBA) at:
anrodriguez@mwe.com

2021 Bill of Rights Contest Rules:

Who May Enter

The contest is open to all high school students enrolled in the Boston, Worcester, and Springfield Public School Districts. High school students are defined as those in grades 9-12.

Essay Length and Format

The maximum essay length is 550 words. Any references/citations would not be included in the word count. Essays must be submitted through the following site:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021 BOR Essay](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021_BOR_Essay)

Entry Deadline

Entries will be accepted from December 1, 2021 through 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 3, 2022. Winners will be notified no later than the week of January 17, 2022.

Judging

Essays will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Structured, creative, and tightly-focused response that demonstrates a genuine grappling with the topic
- Convincing arguments supported by specific examples
- Carefully proofread for grammar and punctuation

Prizes

First place: \$500; Second place: \$300. Prizes for honorable mentions will also be awarded. Essays will be published on the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts' website and in the FBA Massachusetts Chapter's newsletter. Winners will be asked to read their entries at a virtual event in late January (DATE/TIME TBA).

Release Forms & Zoom Event Participation

Should you become a finalist in the contest, you will be required to submit a release form allowing the U.S. District Court and the Federal Bar Association-Massachusetts Chapter to publish your essay on its website and in print publications. All attendees at the Zoom event should note the event will be recorded and screenshots will be taken.

Disqualification

Reasons for disqualification include: incomplete entries, off-topic essays, committing plagiarism, not meeting the submission deadline, and not providing a release form if requested.